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DEPT FOR DRL, INL, AND EUR/SCE, NSC FOR BRAUN, USUN FOR
DREW SCHUFLETOWSKI, USOSCE FOR STEVE STEGER

E.O. 12958: DECL: 08/04/2016

TAGS: [PGOV](#) [PREL](#) [KDEM](#) [UNMIK](#) [YI](#)

SUBJECT: KOSOVO: CONTACT GROUP MESSAGE TO PRISTINA WELL
RECEIVED

Classified By: COM TINA S. KAIDANOW FOR REASONS 1.4 (B) AND (D).

¶1. (C) SUMMARY: Keeping to the language worked out in Contact Group capitals, COM led other CG representatives (along with the heads of the local EU and European Commission missions) in a demarche on the Kosovo negotiating team (the "Unity Team") on the results of the July 24 high-level meeting in Vienna, the situation in northern Kosovo and the need for greater flexibility by the Kosovo negotiating team at this stage of talks. COM privately passed additional USG points to Unity Team coordinator Blerim Shala on what is expected from the Kosovo negotiating team in the next stage of technical talks scheduled for August 7-8 in Vienna. END SUMMARY.

¶2. (SBU) The Kosovo negotiating team (all present except Hashim Thaci, who was replaced by Fatmir Limaj) convened the morning of August 4 on short notice at our request to receive the joint Contact Group (CG) demarche. Afterwards USOP, on behalf of the Contact Group, issued the joint CG "Statement on the Situation in Northern Kosovo."

¶3. (SBU) The message was received well and with no dissent. President Fatmir Sejdiu, speaking on behalf of the entire Unity Team, noted that the issues in the CG message were exactly those the team would be discussing when it met later in the day. He said that the Kosovo negotiating team wants stability in Kosovo and respect for its territorial integrity, and he pledged to be constructive because it was in the interests of all the people of Kosovo. He added that the proposal on minorities rights, which the negotiating team would approve August 4 for use in the Vienna meetings August 7 and 8, provides a good framework for addressing the issues the Contact Group raised.

¶4. (C) Prior to the CG demarche, COM passed more detailed points on the upcoming technical talks on decentralization and cultural heritage to Unity Team coordinator Blerim Shala. On decentralization, Shala acknowledged that the Unity Team will have to enlarge some of the proposed municipalities. On northern Mitrovica, Shala also said that the Unity Team knows that it will need to accept the reality of the city's division, and that there would be Serbian administration of

the hospital and university there (as well as asymmetrical decentralization elsewhere), but that they needed some sort of fig leaf such as the proposed joint Mitrovica board to sell the plan. Shala also said that the Unity Team will give in on the size of buffer zones around Serbian Orthodox monasteries and patriarchal sites. He claimed that Decani remains the most controversial, but that if the monks there want the zone to remain at its current 800 hectare size, then the team would cede on that point, as well.

¶5. (U) U.S. Office Pristina clears this cable for release in its entirety to U.N. Special Envoy for Kosovo Martti Ahtisaari.
KAIDANOW